



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE FOR THE THIRD  
CONSECUTIVE YEAR CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER NAMES CHICAGO AS BEST BIG  
CITY TO VISIT**

*Top Accolade for Chicago Received as Part of the Travel Publication's Annual Readers'  
Choice Awards*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Choose Chicago announced that for the third year in a row the readers of Condé Nast Traveler have voted Chicago as the best big city in the U.S. Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry.

"This wonderful recognition not only reflects the beauty and excitement of our great city but also our tourism industry's dedicated efforts to attract people from across the country and around the globe," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Chicago will always roll out the welcome mat for visitors and continue showcasing the sights and sounds of our world-class institutions and cultural life throughout our dynamic neighborhoods and communities, as well as in our magnificent downtown."

This year, more than 600,000 Condé Nast Traveler readers across the globe submitted a record-breaking number of responses rating their travel experiences to provide a full snapshot of where and how we travel today. The "Best Big City" category was first added in 2015 with New York nabbing the top spot in 2015 and 2016. Chicago first was voted Best Big City in 2017, repeating the selection in 2018 and has now won for the third year in a row.

"Chicago being named best big city to visit is a true accolade for all of us in Chicago's hospitality and meetings industry," said Glenn Eden, chair of Choose Chicago's Board of Directors. "This recognition validates the momentum that we have been able to build upon these past few years but further underscores the City's impact on the nation and world as a destination that everyone should experience."

The award comes as the city continues to be recognized for its world-renowned culinary scene, including a growing number of Michelin-starred and James Beard



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award-winning restaurants, the buzz created by the expanded Riverwalk, top rankings of numerous Chicago museums, attractions and tours, a thriving entertainment scene, including the ongoing celebration of the Year of Chicago Theater and the city's international acclaim for architecture and music. Adding to this momentum, Chicago has opened 26 new hotels in the past four years, including many that are located in emerging neighborhoods, further adding to the breadth and impact of the visitor industry.

"It's always significant when a leading travel publication and its savvy and knowledgeable readers vote you the number one big city destination in the nation," said David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago. "To be selected now for a third year in a row speaks volumes about the kind of city and destination that Chicago is and the incredible potential that we have to further build on our emerging reputation. It's also a tribute to the overall effort and investments of so many in our community who are working hard every day to invite, serve, and welcome the world to our home."

The recognition from Condé Nast readers coincides with a strategic decision three years ago to expand the focus to attract more leisure visitors to Chicago from major feeder markets throughout the United States as well as a concerted effort to garner more overnight visitors. According to hotel occupancy reports generated by Smith Travel Research, Leisure Room Demand (rooms consumed) has grown 14% in the past three years, with the majority of this growth generated from visitors outside of Chicago's traditional market of nine neighboring states. This growth trend has continued in 2019 as Leisure Room Demand (rooms consumed) is up 4.7% for the first eight months of the year.

Choose Chicago's recently redesigned website, [www.ChooseChicago.com](http://www.ChooseChicago.com), has generated more than 6.3 million site visits in the first eight months of 2019 representing a year-over-year increase of 10.7%.

#### About Condé Nast Traveler

Condé Nast Traveler is the world's most distinguished travel title providing inspiration and advice for discerning travelers. Authoritative and influential, Condé Nast Traveler is a multi-platform, transatlantic brand. Publishing US and UK print editions under Editor-in-Chief Melinda Stevens, Condé Nast Traveler offers award-winning expertise in luxury travel from around the world. For more, visit [www.cntraveler.com](http://www.cntraveler.com).

#### About Choose Chicago

Choose Chicago is the official sales and marketing organization responsible for promoting Chicago as a global visitor and meetings destination, leveraging the city's



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unmatched assets to ensure the economic vitality of the city and its member business community. For more information, visit [choosechicago.com](http://choosechicago.com). Follow @ChooseChicago on Twitter and Instagram @choosechicago. Like us on Facebook.

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